

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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63

ACTION SS-25

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R 221516Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 919

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5201

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT ENRG EC

SUBJ: POSSIBLE POVEDA MOVE AGAINST VARGAS

1. IN MY CONFIDENTIAL MEETING WITH POVEDA ON T-G PROBLEM, REPORTED SEPTEL, HE INDICATED COMPLETE DISGUST WITH MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES VARGAS. HE AGAIN TOLD ME THAT HE INTENDED TO INSIST ON VARGAS' OUSTER. "WE'D BETTER HAVE A MINISTERIAL SHAKE-UP EARLY IN AGUST". HE BELIEVES VARGAS IS DELIBERATELY CREATING PROBLEMS WITH THE COMPANIES IN ORDER TO PROVOKE THEM INTO ACTIONS WHICH WILL RESULT IN NATIONALIZATION. HE ALSO BELIEVES VARGAS HOPES THEREBY TO PROMOTE HIS EVENTUAL ACCESSION TO THE PRESIDENCY.

2. POVEDA ALSO SAID SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT GENERAL DURAN: "VARGAS IS SO CLEVER THAT SOMETIMES HE CONVINCES CURAN THAT HIS ARGUMENTS ABOUT T-G ARE CORRECT." WE BELIEVE DURAN HIMSELF HAS AMBITIONS TO SUCCEED TO POVEDA'S PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR AND THAT HE MAY BE AFRAID OF VARGAS. THUS, DURAN IS THE WEAK LINK IN POVEDA'S PLANS TO GET RID OF VARGAS.

3. WHEN I ASKED POVEDA IF OUSTING VARGAS MIGHT NOT "CUASE PROBLEMS" IN THE ARMY, HE SID NO. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE VARGAS HAS THE SUPPORT OF MORE THAN A HANDFUL OF FELLOW OFFICERS, NONE OF WHOM HAVE ANY POWER.

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4. IF POVEDA TRIES TO MOVE AGAINST VARGAS IT COULD PROVOKE

A CRISIS WITHIN THE SUPREME COUNCIL. IF HE CAN STIFFEN
DURAN'S SPINE, HOWEVER, I THINK POVEDA CAN DO IT WITHOUT
A MAJOR CRISIS IN THE ARMY.

5. THE NEXT FEW WEEKS SHOULD BE DICEY.
BLOOMFIELD

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NNN

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